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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Last-Minute Bargaining on Iraqi Constitution - Aksam
Sunnis Key in Last-Minute Constitutional Talks - Sabah
Kurds Rally for Right to Self-Determination - Milliyet
Iraqi Turkmen Demand Autonomy - Milliyet
Peshmerge to Undertake Security in Northern Iraq - Milliyet
8/14
Women Demand More Representation in Iraq - Hurriyet 8/14
Italy Begins Iraq Pullout - Milliyet 8/14
Israel Leaves Gaza 38 Years After - Milliyet
No Women in New Iranian Cabinet - Miliyet

OPINION MAKERS

London Advises EU Members to Contact 'TRNC' - Zaman
Iran's Former Ankara Ambassador Appointed as FM - Zaman
Ahmedinajad Forms Hardline Cabinet - Cumhuriyet
Kurds' Show of Force in Kirkuk - Cumhuriyet
Kurds Protest Against Jafari - Yeni Safak
Muqtada Sadr Opposes Autonomous Shiite Region - Yeni Safak
8/14
US Kills 15 Civilians at Ramadi Mosque - Yeni Safak 8/14
Bush: We May Use Force Against Iran - Yeni Safak 8/14
Schroeder Warns Bush Not to Attack Iran - Yeni Safak
Historic Gaza Withdrawal Begins, Settlers Resist - Zaman
Gaza to Remain Under Israeli Control - Hurriyet
Gaza, Iraq Critical Tests for US in the Middle East - Zaman
8/14
Abbas: Jerusalem to Become Capital of Palestine - Yeni Safak
8/14
UN, Amnesty Warn UK Against New Terror Law - Cumhuriyet 8/14
Bakiyev Pledges Independence - Yeni Safak
Castro Turns 79 - Radikal
US on Yellow Security Alert - Yeni Safak 8/14
Minorities to Outnumber White Americans in 2050 - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Bush Letter to Erdogan: US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Nancy
McEldowney passed to Prime Minister Erdogan a letter from
President Bush in which the President stressed determination
to continue cooperation with Turkey through a shared
'strategic vision,' Monday's "Yeni Safak" reports. Bush
expressed hope that cooperation would include political,
military, and economic elements. President Bush also
stressed the importance of the joint struggle against
terrorism, reiterated US support for Turkey's integration
into the EU, and pledged that the US would continue to take
steps to resolve the Cyprus problem. A US diplomat
confirmed the existence of the letter, saying that it was a
sign of continuing dialogue between Ankara and Washington.

Sakra Admits Involvement in 9/11 Attacks: Al-Qaida militant
Luai Sakra, a Syrian national arrested for organizing the
bombings against British and Jewish targets in Istanbul on
November 2003, claimed to have provided the attackers of
September 11 with passports and money, weekend papers
reported. Sakra said he knew Muhammad Ata, plotter of the
attacks against the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon,
adding that he had also met with Zargawi in Iraq. Sakra
claimed he had organized terrorist activities for 'jihad,'
but added that he drinks alcohol and does not pray. Sakra
is believed to be among the five top leaders of al-Qaida.
Security officials said that Sakra had been undergoing
psychiatric therapy. Medicine discovered on Sakra when he
was arrested indicated that he was receiving treatment for
manic-depression or panic attacks. Sakra was charged by a
Turkish court last Thursday with plotting to bomb Israeli
cruise liners near Turkey's Mediterranean resort of Alanya.

Papers also report that police found a large cache of weapons at a villa recently purchased by Sakra and an accomplice in the Mediterranean coastal city of Antalya, where the two men had reportedly lived with three women.

Iraqi Diplomat Denies Charges of al-Qaida Connection: Tarik Hamdi al-Adhami, a diplomat at the Iraqi Embassy in Ankara accused of links with Osama bin-Ladin, told the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) yesterday that the allegations against him are unfounded. The Iraqi Embassy in Ankara is expected to make a statement on the matter today, Monday's papers report. Turkish officials said they had no evidence confirming al-Adhami's involvement in terrorist activities. Al-Adhami, who is married to a Palestinian US citizen, allegedly took satellite telephone batteries to Osama bin Ladin in Afghanistan last year. He was assigned to the Iraqi Embassy in Ankara in May. A lawsuit was filed against him in the United States for providing false information on his citizenship documents and loan applications. How al-Adhami managed to leave the US remains unclear, according to the press.

Erdogan Visits Diyarbakir: 'The Kurdish problem is everybody's problem -- but above all mine,' Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told a crowd in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir, Saturday papers reported. 'We will solve all problems through democracy,' Erdogan said. 'We have made mistakes in the past. There was regional discrimination. We are ready to face these mistakes,' Erdogan said, adding that the nation and the state would fight those who supported violence and terror. 'The Kurdish issue will be solved within the framework of republican principles and constitutional order by boosting democracy, law, and welfare,' Erdogan stressed. The PM later met with Diyarbakir mayor Osman Baydemir at the governor's office. Papers highlight Erdogan remarks promising more democracy to solve the problems in the region. However, only 700 people turned up to hear Erdogan's remarks. Some commentators say that Erdogan had made a goodwill gesture that was left without a response. Mayor Baydemir told "Milliyet" that he would have gathered 'a crowd of one million people' if the PM had issued the proper messages for the region. Baydemir said that while some of Erdogan's comments were inspiring, the visit was 'far from meeting all expectations.' 'If the necessary conditions are created, we can convince those in the mountains to leave their weapons,' he stressed. Baydemir also called on the PKK to end its attacks without waiting for a new step from the Turkish government, saying that a positive response should be given to Erdogan, who had accepted the existence of the 'Kurdish problem.' Baydemir admitted that the legal representatives of the Kurdish movement are having difficulty in convincing the PKK to give up its attacks. Papers note that PKK attacks continued in the wake of Erdogan's visit. A PKK militant trying to plant a roadside bomb near Hakkari was killed in fighting with security forces over the weekend. On Sunday, Elazig Governor Kadir Kocdemir escaped unhurt from an attempted assassination by the PKK. In Mersin, a bomb-laden car exploded 100 meters before it could reach a local police station. One terrorist was killed in the blast. The PKK said that its 'legitimate resistance' would continue in the face of the government's policies of isolation, denial, and liquidation.

Turkey to Give Iraq Protest Note Against Terrorist Infiltrations: Ankara is to give Baghdad a note of protest against the infiltration of terrorists from Iraq into Turkey, Monday papers report. If the Iraqi government fails to prevent infiltrations, Turkey will reportedly ask Baghdad for permission to carry out cross-border incursions against the terrorists inside Iraq territory. If Baghdad turns down the request, Turkey could invoke article 51 of the UN Treaty to launch cross-border military operations. At the three-party security talks among the US, Turkey, and Iraq in Washington last month, US officials had advised Turkey to handle the PKK problem with the Iraqis, the reports claim. An unidentified US official told "Sabah" that the US is encouraging Turkey to work more closely with Iraq on the PKK issue. The official said it would be 'natural' for Turkey to urge Baghdad to meet Turkish expectations on the issue.

US to Open Consulate in Suleymaniye: Sunday's "Yeni Safak" reported that the US is preparing to open a consulate in Suleymaniye in northern Iraq. The report originated on the nefel.com website, which known to be close to Barzani and the KDP. If a suitable area is not found in the northern Iraqi city, the US consulate will be opened in Erbil, according to the report.

Turkmen Want Autonomy in Iraq: Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) Turkey representative Ahmet Muradli told Monday's "Milliyet" that the Turkmen in Iraq would demand autonomy in the face of similar demands by the Kurds and Shiites. Muradli said the proposed Turkmen Federation would cover an area from Tal Afar in the north to Altinkopru, Kirkuk, Dohuk, and

Tuhurmatu in south. Muratli noted that the Turkmen also wanted to be recognized as a constituent people of Iraq, and insisted on having their language accepted as an official language in the Turkmen region. Muardli warned that the Turkmen would vote against the constitution if their demands are not met.

EU Calls for Special Commission for Southeast Turkey: The European Union (EU) has urged Ankara to set up a special commission including the EU, World Bank and IMF representatives to tackle the economic and social problems in southeastern Turkey. Diplomatic sources said the EU had offered Turkey cooperation in the effort to address regional imbalances in the country. Turkey was urged to prepare an emergency action plan for the southeast.

RTUK to Issue Licenses for Kurdish Broadcasts: Turkey's radio and television watchdog RTUK has asked several local broadcasters in the southeast to submit the necessary documents to get a license for broadcasts in Kurdish after receiving orders from PM Erdogan to speed up work for broadcasts in languages other than Turkish, Monday's "Yeni Safak" reports. Despite the fact that regulations allowing broadcasts in Kurdish were passed two years ago, no applications by private channels for broadcasting in Turkish have been approved. The paper expects RTUK to issue the licenses for Kurdish broadcasting before October 3, the starting date for EU entry talks with Turkey.

Turkey a Transit Country for Refugees: Jurgen Blechinger, an immigration specialist linked to the German Protestant Church, said that the problem of global migration cannot be solved without close cooperation with Turkey, Sunday's "Zaman" reported. Blechinger said that refugees coming from Asian and African countries use Turkey as a transit country before taking asylum in European Union (EU) countries. 'The EU cannot solve the refugee problem by closing its borders to refugees,' he noted. According to data released by the International Organization for Migration, 250,000 migrants use Turkey as a transit country to move on to other countries. Only a few thousand of the refugees apply to Turkey for asylum.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iran, Turkey-Iraq/US Relations/PKK
"Will the US Strike Against Iran?"
Ferai Tinc commented in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (8/15): "President Bush has said once again that the military option remains on the table for Iran. But this brings a question to one's mind: can President Bush really be thinking of, and would he pursue, a military option against Iran while the bodies of American soldiers continue to come from Iraq. The answer to this is "why not?" It may not happen in the immediate future, but the military option is certainly on the table. . Moreover, the US is not the only country talking about a military option against Iran. Israel has been talking about this for a long time. Israel considers the Iranian nuclear capacity as a direct threat, as the mullahs' regime aims to wipe Israel off the map. . If the IAEA's upcoming report on Iran's nuclear capacity turns to be negative, the UNSC will take up the issue and an embargo against Iran will be discussed. Russia and China are expected to oppose the embargo option, a development that would in fact make things easier for the pro-war advocates. Once this polarization occurs, the possibility of an intervention becomes more likely. It seems there are more troubles ahead in this region."

"Washington's View of PM Erdogan's Visit to Diyarbakir"
Washington-based Yasemin Congar wrote in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (8/15): "Washington welcomed the messages given by PM Erdogan last week in Diyarbakir, where he acknowledged the existence of the Kurdish problem, indicated the need for more democracy, and warned about not repeating the mistakes of the past in seeking a solution. . A US official who is well informed about Turkey recalled previous statements by Erdogan about the Cyprus issue, and emphasized that 'when Erdogan talked about the Copenhagen criteria as Ankara's guideline for a settlement, he remained true to his word. It remains to be seen what concrete steps will follow his statements in Diyarbakir about the Kurdish issue.' Regarding the nature of those steps, the US official gave a short but important answer: 'It is for the Turkish government to decide what steps to take. But you might also want to go back to the relevant part of the State Department's annual human rights report for some ideas.' By referring to the DOS Human Rights report, I believe Washington wants to see full freedom to express the Kurdish identity, both socially and politically. That obviously includes a more liberal use of the Kurdish language."

"There is no Alternative to Turkey"
Kamuran Ozbir commented in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (8/15): "Turkey's rejection of the passage of US troops across its territory in 2003 had a damaging effect on Turkey-US relations. The US needs Turkey as much as Turkey needs

the US. There have been some recent efforts on both sides to improve the relationship. Meanwhile the US has found itself a new ally -- the Kurds. There was no such alliance before, but the huge assistance the US received from the Kurds in Iraq paved the way for this new alliance. . But the US-Kurdish partnership in northern Iraq is negatively affected by the continuation of a weak economy in the Kurdish area. It seems certain that Washington, taking these factors into account, will focus more on Turkey to improve bilateral relations. As I mentioned, such efforts have already started. . Turkey is an indispensable part of NATO, with its unique geographical location. I believe the Americans also appreciate this fact."

"The Kurdish Problem"

Murat Yetkin wrote in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (08/14): "When Barzani was elected head of the Kurdish region some weeks ago, Hak-Par chairman Abdulmelik Firat organized a group of tribal leaders, representatives of religious orders, and regional opinion makers for a visit to Erbil to congratulate Barzani. In "deep Diyarbakir," people were talking about how Barzani had treated the delegation with great honor and displayed a very friendly attitude. They were also talking about the fact that Barzani received the group in a room adorned with a photograph of Sheikh Sait, Firat's grandfather and the instigator of the first large-scale Kurdish rebellion in the history of the Turkish Republic.

Another grandson of Sheikh Sait, the lawyer Muhammad Akar, is head of the AKP district party office in Diyarbakir. He explained how an old woman from a village had come to see him just before the Erdogan visit. The woman came with her son, who was currently doing his military service. She cried as she explained that while her son was charged with the responsibility of fighting the PKK, her husband and daughter had joined the ranks of the PKK in the mountains. The woman said she was afraid that they would come up against each other during a clash and that one of them would be killed. The problem was how to get them to come down from the mountains. (TGS Deputy Chief General Ilker Basbug has said that a way must be found to entice the militants to leave the mountains. From Prime Minister Erdogan's words yesterday, we understand that an amnesty of the kind advocated by DEHAP and the PKK is currently not on the agenda.)

Meanwhile, every day the PKK is developing new ways to test its strength among the local population. When we look from Ankara or Istanbul, we think that Kurdish language courses have been closed due to a lack of interest. But seen from Diyarbakir, it becomes clear that the courses have been left to wither as the PKK has intimidated the population in an effort to force the government to accept mandatory primary school education in Kurdish. MHP leader Devlet Bahceli criticized Erdogan yesterday for using the phrase 'Kurdish problem,' which he viewed as a sign of weakness and surrender in the fight against terrorism. The CHP, DSP, and ANAVATAN made similar criticisms. But we need to ask this question: Suleyman Demirel, when he was President, said that "this is the 29th Kurdish rebellion." Without acknowledging that there is a "Kurdish problem," can we really resolve this? Can we find a way out?"

MCELDOWNEY